Five billion dollar fund for infrastructure development projects

953. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indo-US forum has offered to set up a $5 billion fund for infrastructure development projects in India provided it is run with minimum Government participation;

(b) if so, whether Government have already received the proposal for structure of the fund;

(c) if so, whether the agreement to device a mechanism to set up the fund was discussed;

(d) if so, whether the modalities of the fund have been decided; and

(e) if so, the details of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Indo-US Forum had recommended the setting up of a $5 billion fund for infrastructure development in India. Infrastructure Development Finance Company Limited (IDFC), Citigroup Inc. (Citi), India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) and Blackstone Group Holdings L.P. (together with its affiliates, (Blackstone) have launched such a fund.

(b) to (e) The structure of the fund has been spelt out and the modalities to set up the fund have been decided by the promoters. The plan is to deploy about US$ 2 billion in equity capital and US$ 3 billion in long term debt financing with maturities exceeding ten years. The equity fund of USD 2 billion would be raised in 2 tranches of USD 1 billion each, one after the other. IDFC, Citi and Blackstone will together invest US$ 250 million. The IIFCL will invest a small portion. The balance is expected to come from reputable international investors as well as selected domestic institutional investors. The second equity fund of USD 1 billion would be raised subsequenty. The equity financing program of US $ 3 billion will be manager by IDFC and will be invested in greenfield, brownfield and operating projects primarily in roads, power, airports, ports, and industrial and commercial infrastructure.

Tax holiday to Himachal Pradesh

954. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that since 2002 the Central Government have extended tax holiday to the States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) what is the quantum of fresh investments that have been made in industrial projects in these States and the number of jobs that have been created in these industrial units; and

(c) how much fresh investment made in the neighbouring State of Punjab since 2002, and the number of jobs created in these units since then?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir. While income-tax concessions have been continuously provided to the State of Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh since 1.4.1993, the tax concession was extended to the State of Uttarakhand *w.e.f.* 7.1.2003.

(b) The quantum of fresh investments made and employment generated in these States are as under:

Jammu & Kashmir [14.6.2002 to 31.3.2007]

Investment - Rs. 3403.47 crore

Employment generated - 72,209

Himachal Pradesh [7.1.2003 to 31.3.2007]

Investment - Rs. 2053.24 crore

Employment generated - 37,893

Uttarakhand [7.1.2003 to 30.6.2006]

Investment - Rs. 19035.88 crore

Employment generated - 1,40,972

(c) The figures for the State of Punjab are not available with the Government.

Foreign exchange spent by students studying abroad

955. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Indian students studying abroad; and

(b) how much foreign exchange is spent by these students annually by way of remittances through R.B.I?

THE MINISTER OF STATF IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, does not maintain information relating to total number of Indian students studying abroad at a point of time. However, as per that Department, it is estimated that 1,40,000 Indian students went abroad for education during 2004-05.

(b) As per the provisional estimates of the Reserve Bank of India, education related payments under the Travel Account of India's Balance of Payments amounted to US $ 1058 million in 2005-06 as against US $ 642 million in 2004-05.

Decline in National Savings Scheme

956. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the collection from National Savings Scheme has been declining in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of collections during the last three years; State-wise;